

Message Text

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TO ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS IMMEDIATE

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SUBJECT: TEXT OF PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT ON PANAMA CANAL
TREATY

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT CARTER ON THE
PANAMA CANAL TREATY.

QUOTE

1. FOR THIRTEEN YEARS WE HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN NEGOTIATIONS
FOR A NEW PANAMA CANAL TREATY THAT WOULD STRENGTHEN OUR
SECURITY INTERESTS, BE FAIR TO OURSELVES AND THE PEOPLE
OF PANAMA, AND INSURE FREE INTERNATIONAL USE
OF THE CANAL IN A SPIRIT OF COOPERATION AND FRIENDSHIP
AMONG ALL NATIONS IN THIS HEMISPHERE. IN SPITE OF DIFFI-
CULTIES AND EVEN BLOODSHED, EACH OF MY PREDECESSORS SINCE
PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON HAS DECIDED THAT THIS EFFORT MUST
BE CONTINUED, AND I'M PLEASED THAT IT WILL BE COMPLETED
DURING MY OWN ADMINISTRATION.

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2. THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF AND OTHER PRINCIPAL ADVISORS
OF MINE HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THESE TALKS AT EVERY STAGE.
ALL OF US BELIEVE THAT THESE AGREEMENTS ARE GOOD ONES, AND
THAT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TREATIES INCORPORATING THESE
AGREEMENTS ARE IMPORTANT TO OUR LONG TERM NATIONAL INTERESTS.

3. UNDER THE CANAL TREATY THAT WILL NOW BE PREPARED, WE

WILL HAVE OPERATING CONTROL AND THE RIGHT TO PROTECT AND DEFEND THE PANAMA CANAL WITH OUR OWN MILITARY FORCES UNTIL THE END OF THIS CENTURY. UNDER A SEPARATE NEUTRALITY TREATY WE WILL HAVE THE RIGHT TO ASSURE THE MAINTENANCE OF THE PERMANENT NEUTRALITY OF THE CANAL AS WE MAY DEEM NECESSARY. OUR WARSHIPS ARE GUARANTEED THE PERMANENT RIGHT TO EXPEDITIOUS PASSAGE WITHOUT REGARD TO THEIR TYPE OF PROPULSION OR THE CARGO THEY CARRY. AND THE TREATIES WILL BE A FOUNDATION FOR A NEW COOPERATIVE ERA IN OUR RELATIONS WITH ALL OF LATIN AMERICA.

4. AS PROVIDED BY OUR U.S. CONSTITUTION, I WILL SEEK THE ADVICE AND CONSENT OF THE SENATE FOR THE RATIFICATION OF THESE TREATIES. I KNOW THAT EACH SENATOR AND EACH MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES WILL GIVE THE UTMOST AND CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO THESE AGREEMENTS NOT ONLY TO THE TREATIES THEMSELVES, BUT TO THE POSITIVE INFLUENCE THAT THEIR APPROVAL WILL HAVE IN OUR OWN COUNTRY AND IN OUR POSITION IN THE WORLD AS A STRONG AND GENEROUS NATION.

5. WE WILL WORK WITH PANAMA TO ASSESS THE NEED FOR A SEA LEVEL CANAL AND WILL ALSO COOPERATE ON POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE EXISTING CANAL.

6. I BELIEVE THAT THESE TREATIES WILL HELP TO USHER
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IN A NEW DAY IN HEMISPHERIC RELATIONS.

7. ALL OF THE COUNTRIES OF LATIN AMERICA ARE JOINED WITH US IN THE CONVICTION THAT A NEW TREATY WHICH PROPERLY RESPONDS TO THE PANAMIAN ASPIRATIONS AND FULLY PRESERVES OUR OWN SECURITY AND OTHER INTERESTS WILL GIVE US AN OPPORTUNITY TO WORK TOGETHER MORE EFFECTIVELY TOWARD OUR COMMON OBJECTIVES. UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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